

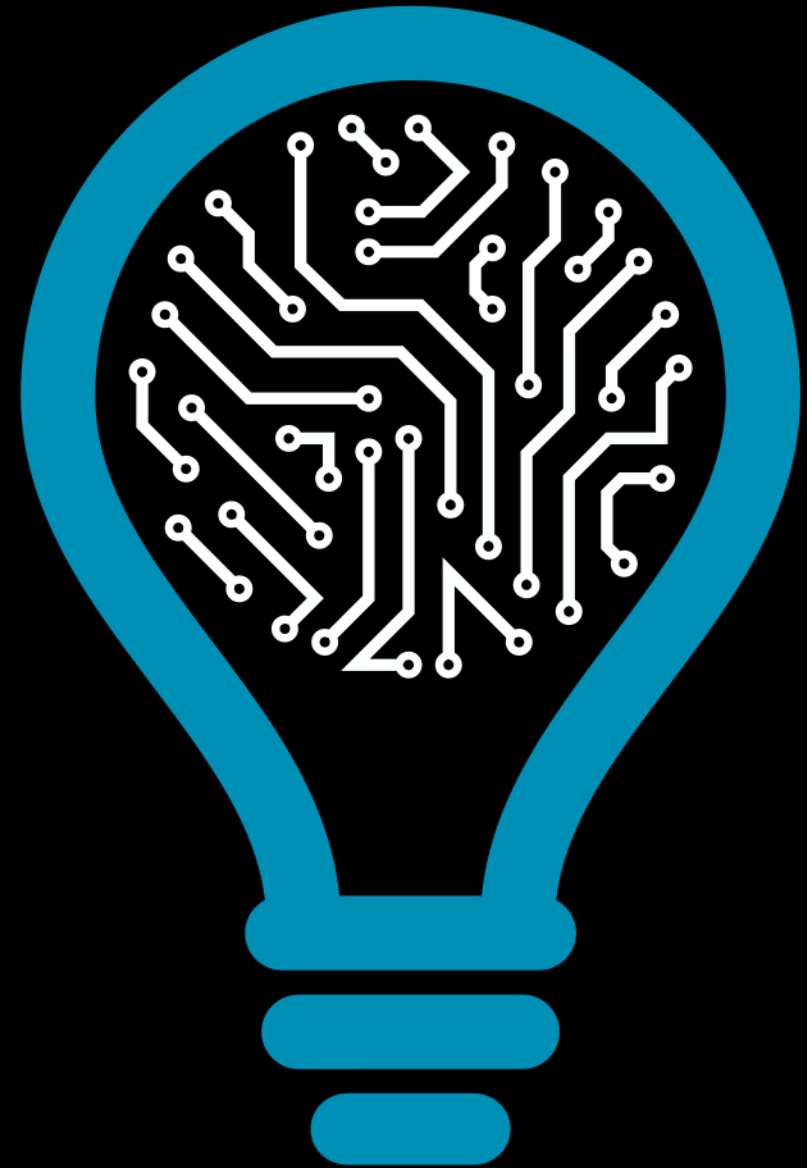
Foreign Academic Degrees and Diplomas Recognition

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From: International Relations Service (SRI)
To: CCI Meeting



INSTITUTE FOR SYSTEMS
AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING,
TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE



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- Types of Recognition
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Introduction to Foreign Academic Degrees and Diplomas Recognition

1. Foreign degrees and diplomas recognition – What does it mean?

As established by the Portuguese Decree Law 66/2018, it is a **formal process** whereby **academic degrees and diplomas granted by foreign Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are recognised** either by the **Portuguese Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES)** or by a **Public HEI (University or Polytechnic Institute) in Portugal**.

2. Why does INESC TEC require the foreign degree recognition from selected candidates?

INESC TEC follows the requirement set by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) with respect to the granting of fellowships or celebration of employment contracts. These are contingent on candidates having their foreign academic degrees and diplomas recognised by a public HEI in Portugal. INESC TEC has been progressively extending this requirement to other job positions opened by the institution, regardless of whether they are related to FCT-funded projects or not. It is a way to create a level playing field in the recruitment process of new staff.

Should this be a requirement for filling in a vacancy at INESC TEC, the vacancy announcement will explicitly mention it.

3. When should the selected candidates present to INESC TEC the document attesting their foreign degree and diploma recognition in Portugal?

Candidates will not be asked to provide such document in the application stage. INESC TEC will demand the presentation of the recognition degree certificate issued by DGES or a public HEI **only before proceeding with the issuance and signing of the fellowship or employment contract with the selected candidate.**

4. Where can selected candidates request this recognition?

The request is submitted through a centralised online form available on the DGES' website. The selected candidates can start by using the **DGES' wizard**, which has been recently updated, to check which recognition procedure is likely to apply to their situation on the basis of some information they will need to insert. **Based on the wizard's results, which are nonetheless indicative, the selected candidates are then instructed to fill in an online form to submit their request to the competent entity** (e.g.: DGES or a Portuguese Public University / Polytechnic, depending on the procedure to be followed).



Introduction to Foreign Academic Degrees and Diplomas Recognition

DGES also provides a [practical guide](#) to help candidates complete the recognition request form. Nevertheless, INESC TEC's International Relations Service (SRI) is available to offer guidance to candidates applying for degree recognition following the opening of a job posting at INESC TEC.

There are three types of recognition: **Automatic, Level and Specific (Decree Law 66/2018, article no. 4).**

Automatic Recognition is the fastest and most straightforward procedure and is undertaken by DGES or a Public HEI.

This type of recognition applies to academic degrees and diplomas, for which recognition is being requested, that are included in the list of degrees and diplomas approved by the Commission for the Recognition of Foreign Degrees and Diplomas. **When the Automatic Recognition is not a viable option for the requester, he/she must proceed with a request for the Level or Specific Recognition.**

Level or Specific Recognitions are awarded by Public Portuguese Universities or Polytechnics. Both procedures are lengthier than the Automatic Recognition because more elements and documents will need to be analysed by an appointed jury (except in Level Recognitions requests when there is a precedent at the HEI; in these cases, there is no need to designate a jury and the time-to-recognition is shortened).

In the next page, a definition for each type of recognition is provided.

4. When should INESC TEC's candidates initiate their request?

As mentioned earlier in this section, selected candidates will not be asked by INESC TEC to present the certificate issued by DGES or a Portuguese HEI before the contracting stage. However, **any candidate who is strongly considering coming to Portugal to work and/or study, may initiate the request during the application stage and while they are in their country of origin (if they have obtained their academic degrees there).** Anticipating this request may be particularly important when the candidate's degree calls for a case-by-case analysis, i.e., for a Level or Specific Recognition, for the procedures last longer. **However, candidates are advised to inform themselves first on the costs concerning degree recognition, and contact the SRI before moving forward with the request.**

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Types of Recognition (Decree Law 66/2018, article no. 4)

➔ Automatic Recognition (*)

"This form of recognition generically recognises a higher education foreign degree or diploma with identical level, objectives and nature to the Portuguese degrees of "licenciado", "mestre" and "doutor" and the short cycle professional higher technical diplomas, that are included in the list of degrees and diplomas approved by the Commission for the Recognition of Foreign Degrees and Diplomas." The full updated list can be consulted [here](#).

When asking for this type of recognition, requesters may also want to have their final grade converted to the Portuguese scale.

➔ Level Recognition (*)

"It is the act that allows to recognise by comparability, in an individualised way, a degree or diploma of foreign higher education as having a level corresponding to an academic degree or Portuguese higher education diploma." Should the recognition be awarded, the certificate will indicate the corresponding degree in Portugal (e.g.: *Licenciado*) but not the field of study, area of knowledge or specialty (e.g.: Bachelor in Bioengineering – *Licenciado em Bioengenharia*).

This procedure's timeframe might be significantly reduced if the Portuguese HEI granted in the past the recognition to an identical degree or diploma awarded by the same foreign institution where the degree or diploma - to be now recognised - has been earned. The [DGES' degree recognition platform](#) allows requesters to check whether their degree or diploma is likely to benefit from precedence through a precedence database.

When asking for this type of recognition, requesters may also want to have their final grade converted to the Portuguese scale.

Important Note: Usually, if a candidate cannot proceed with an Automatic Recognition because their degree/diploma is not eligible for this faster procedure, the Level Recognition should suffice to fill in a job position at INESC TEC.

Nevertheless, bear in mind that some fellowships the candidate may consider applying to while at INESC TEC may also require the conversion of the grade given by the foreign HEI to the Portuguese grading system. If this is the case, at the time of the recognition request, candidates should also express the intention to have their final grade converted to the Portuguese scale.

(*) Source: <https://www.dges.gov.pt/en/pagina/degree-and-diploma-recognition>



Types of Recognition (Decree Law 66/2018, article no. 4)

➔ Specific Recognition (*)

"It is the act that allows the recognition of a degree or diploma from a foreign higher education to be identical to a Portuguese academic degree or higher education diploma, through a casuistic analysis of the level, duration and programmatic content, in a certain area of formation, branch of knowledge or specialty", specifying not only the level but also the area of study to which the recognition is granted (e.g.: *Licenciado em Psicologia – Bachelor in Psychology*).

For this type of recognition, a jury must always be appointed to deliberate on the request and, should this be granted, a grade according to the Portuguese grading system will be given to the requester along with the degree of Bachelor (*Licenciado*), Master (*Mestre*) or PhD (*Doutor*) in a specific area of knowledge/study.

It is also worthwhile noting that **in order to access certain regulated professions and apply for certain fellowships/positions in Portugal, applicants with academic degrees/diplomas earned from HEIs abroad may need to have them recognised through the most in-depth recognition process: the Specific Recognition process.**



In short, when asking for degree recognition, it is very important that candidates:

- decide on the best course of action based not only on the present situation, i.e., on the requirements of the position they will be filling in, **but also on future career opportunities** and what they might demand in terms of academic qualifications-related evidence.
- Select a Portuguese public HEI offering degree-level courses with syllabi identical to the courses where they have obtained their foreign academic degrees/diplomas before proceeding with the recognition request.
- Regardless of the type of recognition, **candidates are always advised to contact the SRI to ascertain whether they are instructing the request properly.**

Supporting Documentation for Degree Recognition

Check out [here](#) the official information

	Document that unequivocally proves that the degree or diploma has been awarded. (e.g.: original version; authenticated copy or simple copy with a registration number / unique identifier)	Document including final grade and scale at the foreign higher education institution	Document issued by the foreign higher education institution which contains the curricular units in which the applicant obtained approval, and which led to the degree or diploma to which recognition is sought, as well as the respective syllabus content, the duration of the studies leading to the degree and its final classification.	Dissertations / Theses (or research, artistic works or achievements)	Official Procedure Timeframe	Indicative fees excluding costs with grade conversion (Examples)	
Automatic	X	Applicable if conversion to the Portuguese grading system is requested	N.A.	N.A.	A maximum of 30 days after full process instruction ⁽¹⁾	€ 44,4 (average)	DGES: € 27,60; UP: €30; UMinho: € 40; UC: € 80
Level	X	Applicable if conversion to the Portuguese grading system is requested	X	X	A maximum of 90 days after full process instruction ⁽¹⁾ In the Level Recognition process with precedence, no more than 30 days after full process instruction ⁽¹⁾	Varying fees (from € 60 to € 600)	UP: € 200 - €600; UMinho: € 460 - € 500; UC: € 500 - € 600
Specific	X	There is no place for conversion of the final grade, but the awarding of a grade by the jury that will analyse the request, instead.	X	X	A maximum of 90 days after full process instruction ⁽¹⁾	Varying fees (from € 200 to € 650)	UP: € 200 - €600; UMinho: € 600; UC: € 500 - € 650

(1) VERY IMPORTANT: The established procedure time limit starts once all mandatory documents have been submitted and the applicable fees paid. However, to the established time limit for a formal decision to be issued by DGES or the concerned public HEI, we must add in the time that precedes the start of the analysis by one of these entities. This time is highly variable and depends on other factors:

- How long it takes for the candidate to gather all the required documents to submit the request;
- The more specific the request, the more burdensome the process is. Often, candidates need to get the documents authenticated by authorised entities; in some cases, they may also need to get them translated to Portuguese if written in a language other than Portuguese, Spanish, French or English. These are established rules, and there is no way to work around them.
- How long it takes for the HEI in Portugal liable for a recognition decision to initiate the formal request analysis, provided that the applicant has presented all the required documents and paid the processing fees (e.g.: the University of Porto was the second HEI in the country with the highest number of recognition requests to handle and the first with highest number of processes duly concluded in 2020).
- When the required documentation is incomplete, how long it takes for the public HEI in Portugal to notify the applicant/requester of their obligation to complete it, considering that the recognition process cannot be initiated without a properly filled out application form, the required supporting documentation and processing fees paid.

Degree Recognition Requests involving the SRI (Overview Table)

01/03/2021

	Selected Candidates	Recognition Type Requested / Competent Authority	Status to Date	First Contact with SRI	Recognition Request Submission Date (DGES online form)	Evaluation Period Start Date (estimated)	Time between Recognition Request Submission Date and Evaluation Period Start Date (DAYS)	Recognition Decision Date (DAYS)	Time-to-recognition (since request submission) (DAYS)
1	Candidate 1	Automatic - DGES	Issued	27/07/2020	28/07/2020	18/08/2020	21	25/08/2020	28
2	Candidate 2	Level - UP	Candidate quitted job offer, some time after process recognition being instructed at UP.	19/06/2020	17/12/2019	13/07/2020	209	Not known	Not known
3	Candidate 3	Level - UC	Candidate quitted job offer, some time after process recognition being instructed at UC.	15/06/2020	15/06/2020	16/06/2020	1	Not known	Not known
4	Candidate 4	Level - UP	Pending request at UP. Recognition process not started yet.	23/10/2020	26/10/2020	NOT STARTED	126 days since recognition request submission	Not known yet	Not known yet
5	Candidate 5	Automatic - IPP	Recognition process instructed at IPP. Evaluation under way.	21/12/2020	22/12/2020	16/02/2021	56		
6	Candidate 6	Specific - UP	Recognition process submitted and to be instructed at UP.	23/12/2020	13/01/2021	NOT STARTED	47 days since recognition request submission	Not known yet	

This table shows that the time-to-recognition (since request submission) varies significantly from case to case. When recruiting a candidate with a foreign degree, recruiters should keep in mind that the legal timeframe for the recognition decision's issuance does not cover the preceding period during which the request is still being duly instructed. The extent of this period is highly variable.



Key Conclusions

- As an institution driven by the highest international standards of scientific excellence, **INESC TEC attracts international talent, i.e., foreign nationals and Portuguese researchers whose academic and/or professional pathways include relevant experiences abroad.**
- Whether we are taking on foreign nationals, Portuguese collaborators whose academic degrees have been earned from foreign institutions, or both, we must ensure that **internationalisation is embedded in our talent recruitment strategies and procedures.**
- With internationalisation hitting and shaping academic curricula and international academic mobility increasing, there are a **few formalities we must not overlook when recruiting international talent - such as those related to visa and degree recognition requests - for they might impact on admission timings. Understanding international recruitment challenges is key to managing expectations from all parties involved and anticipating and mitigating potential risks, especially if a project's timeframe is misaligned with hiring processes timeframes.**
- In academic degree recognition, requests are always analysed either by DGES or a Public Portuguese HEI, not by INESC TEC. This means that **INESC TEC needs to adjust its internal procedures and work closely with the competent institutions to ensure external procedures (involving INESC TEC's applicants) are followed through.**
- **Centre Coordinators and Project Managers should keep in mind that selected candidates with foreign academic degrees/diplomas might have to initiate a recognition process before signing with INESC TEC.** Sometimes, this process can be burdensome and costly for the candidate both in Level Recognition, unless there is a precedent decision to resort to, and Specific Recognition.
- Depending on the type of recognition needed, **the official decision process might last between 30 and 90 days (for a complete analysis of the request after all mandatory documents are duly presented and processing fees paid).**

VERY IMPORTANT: However, to the established time limit for a formal decision to be issued by DGES or the concerned public HEI, we must add in the time that precedes the start of the analysis by one of these entities. Therefore, not surprisingly, the time-to-recognition (starting from the moment the request is submitted to the DGES platform until a formal decision - granting or not the recognition - is issued) may easily extend well beyond the official timeframes, sometimes taking up to 6 months

Recommendations

What can we do to speed up the recognition process on our side:

It is of the utmost importance to shorten the time that precedes the full and proper instruction of the recognition request process to the entity that will be handling it (either DGES or a public HEI). To this end, the SRI proposes to interact with the requester from a very early stage, preferably before submitting the request to the official online platform.

- Any recruitment procedure involving selected candidates whose foreign academic degrees/diplomas must undergo a formal recognition process must be forwarded to the SRI in advance. The SRI might contact the HR Service and the Administrative Assistant of the Centre/Service that is admitting the candidate to seek additional information (if applicable) before getting in touch with the candidate to offer assistance and guidance on degree recognition. However, other formalities, including visa requests, may be dealt with by the SRI at this point too.
- The SRI will assist the candidate closely with the online degree recognition request form completion. However, it is the candidate's sole responsibility to submit the electronic form and ultimately ensure that all required documents have been gathered and the information provided is accurate.
- The SRI will advise the candidate to contact the institution to which the request was made to double-check if the institution's requirements to start the evaluation process have been met.
- From time to time, the SRI will get in touch with the candidate and/or the institution to check the request status, i.e., whether the evaluation has started or not. The SRI will keep the HR Service, the Administrative Assistant and the candidate's Supervisor at INESC TEC in the loop. Once the institution confirms that the request has been properly instructed, the recognition decision shall be taken within the time limits established per type of recognition by the DL 66/2018.
- When a foreign candidate is selected to fill in a vacancy at INESC TEC, he/she should receive the SRI's Mobility Quick Guide for Foreign Newcomers, which includes general information about foreign degrees/diplomas recognition. This Guide is in the making to be released very shortly.



Final Note: Extinction of Integrated Masters and Potential Impact on Foreign Degrees Recognition

- To pursue the full implementation of the measures outlined in the Portuguese Decree-Law 65/2018, the **so-called Integrated Masters (*Mestrados Integrados – MIs*) in the areas of Engineering and Psychology will cease to exist. This change in law will be producing effects as of the academic year 2021/2022.** The foreign academic degrees and diplomas recognition process may be impacted by such a change. How exactly?
 - In the new landscape, with the extinction of Integrated Masters in those areas of study, we will have a 3-year cycle that will confer the Bachelor's Degree (*Licenciatura*) on the student and then a 2-year cycle leading to the awarding of a Masters' degree (*Mestrado*) after completion of the first cycle. **In view of this change, it is possible that an individual with a 5-year bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign HEI applying for degree recognition in Portugal is not necessarily granted the level of Master but the Bachelor's (*Licenciado*), instead.**
- Portuguese HEIs are required to prepare a transition plan to implement the changes brought about by the said Decree-Law as far as MIs are concerned, safeguarding the rights of students already enrolled in an MI when these measures come into force. The Faculty of Engineering of the University Porto has already put forward a plan with a clear timeline - please, check [this](#) recorded webinar session on the theme.
- In the meantime, the [University of Porto's Training and Academic Organisation Unit has announced that foreign degree recognition requests submitted from the 1st of May 2021 onwards will be analysed bearing in mind the end of Integrated Masters \(in those fields of study\) within the three-cycle system.](#)



Source: Webinar - Novos Ciclos de Estudo da FEUP 2020/21

Benefits of this change:



- Harmonisation between the different European qualification levels;
- Increased flexibility, facilitating international mobility and mobility across cycles of studies;
- More comparable and transferable qualifications, facilitating recognition irrespective of where the learning outcomes have been achieved.**
- Better conditions to promote lifelong training aligned with individuals' educational goals;